

TRANSFER OF CASES

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

This policy provides guidelines and procedures regarding the transfer of case responsibility.

B. General Principles

The Department provides services to families based on the strengths and needs of a child and family and the goals they seek to achieve. These services are authorized by the county department having case responsibility, and that responsibility is primarily determined by where the family resides. Court orders governing which DHR county office has case responsibility must be followed.

C. Glossary

Initial Assessment/Investigation - A response to a report of alleged child abuse/neglect (CA/N).

Individualized Service Plan (ISP) - The case plan which is developed in partnership with the members of the child and family planning team.

County of Origin - The county where the child and/or child's family originally resided and received services prior to relocation.

New County of Residence - The county where the child's family has moved and currently resides or the county into which the family is moving.

II. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFERRING CASE RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN A COUNTY

A. CA/N Assessment/Investigation or Prevention Assessment Within County

It is important that there be minimal disruption in the provision of on-going services to families. Each county should develop a protocol for transferring cases internally between workers and units

It is necessary that county protocols include information that addresses the management of safety threats as well as the delivery of services during the transfer process.

County protocols should address management of safety threats and delivery of services during the transfer process which may include:

- How any existing safety plans will be monitored during the transfer process? This would include describing how frequent in person contacts, phone calls, home visits, etc. will be used in the monitoring process;

- How Case transfers will be coordinated between the sending unit and the receiving unit.
- How the family will be prepared for the transfer, to include an introduction of the new worker whenever possible.
- Who will be responsible for scheduling, conducting and attending the transfer ISP.
- What paperwork or other documentation will be completed by the sending unit.
- How the case history and current information will be reviewed by the receiving unit

Note: As a reminder, best practice would include each worker with assignment to a referral or case fully complete narrative, CFA, client screens and other documents in FACTS with all information known and relative to the safety, well-being and permanency of children prior to transfer to another worker.

III. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFERRING CASE RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN COUNTIES

A. CA/N Assessment/Investigation or Prevention Assessment Pending And Family Relocates To Another County

If a family moves to another county during the time a report of alleged abuse/neglect or a prevention assessment is being assessed/investigated, the referral is to be transferred to the new county of residence for completion.

When the county of origin learns that the family has moved, the child welfare worker shall, within 1 working day, telephone the new county of residence to:

- notify them of the family's relocation and that case responsibility is being transferred, and
- provide sufficient information to enable the new county of residence facilitate transfer of the referral in FACTS and proceed with the assessment/investigation (e.g. names of household members, ages, sex, social security numbers, address, content of CA/N report).

Within 3 working days of the call to the new county of residence, the child welfare worker in the county of origin shall:

- update FACTS indicating the county to which the pending Referral is being transferred; and
- Transfer the pending referral in FACTS and also provide written confirmation of the transfer along with any case material that cannot be

uploaded into FACTS to the new county of residence. Section C contains procedures for transferring case record material.

The child welfare worker in the new county of residence shall, within 5 working days of receiving the call from the county of origin, update FACTS to include a new case number and any other changes needed as a result of the relocation.

B. Protective Service Cases Involving Families Who Relocate to Another County

When a family receiving protective services relocates to another county, case responsibility is to be transferred to the new county of residence. The change in residence and subsequent transfer must be reflected in FACTS.

An ISP meeting shall be held to review the case plan and make necessary changes resulting from the family's relocation. This meeting shall be held at a time and location convenient to the team members when possible. **It is essential the ISP meeting take place within 10 working days in order to continue addressing the identified safety risks without interrupting the delivery of services.** The new county of residence is responsible for implementing the plan once the family has relocated.

If the family continues to receive purchased services (previously authorized by the county of origin) following their relocation, the county of origin shall be responsible for the cost of those services for a period not to exceed 30 days. The new county of residence will assume financial responsibility for purchased services once the 30 days has expired or a new service and/or provider is authorized in the new county of residence. Financial responsibility shall be addressed in the ISP.

1. County of Origin Notified Prior To or After Family's Relocation

If the county of origin learns that a family receiving protective services is planning to move to another county, the county of origin shall contact the new county of residence, within 1 working day, to inform them of family's completed or pending relocation. The county of origin will schedule the ISP meeting. The child welfare worker and/or supervisor in the new county of residence shall participate in the ISP either in person or by conference call.

C. Transferring Material in Case Records When Case Responsibility Changes

The following steps shall be taken when transferring material in case records.

- 1) The child welfare worker in the county of origin shall notify all other appropriate DHR programs (i.e., food stamps, family assistance, child support and JOBS) of the family's change in residence as soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days of learning of the change.
- 2) Narrative recording and other screens in FACTS must be made current.
- 3) CFA should be made current.

- 4) The ISP and narrative recording must reflect any changes resulting from the family's relocation. Examples would be changes in providers, household members, etc.
- 5) The county of origin shall retain copies of all documents relating to services provided by that county, correspondence related to the transfer case responsibility, and copies of any other documents it deems appropriate.
- 6) The case will be transferred within FACTS and all other records sent to the new county of residence within 5 working days of the ISP meeting.
- 7) The case shall be reviewed by the assigning supervisor in the new county of residence to determine if all the necessary information is included. If additional information is required, the supervisor shall contact the county of origin.

IV. EXCEPTIONS TO TRANSFERRING CASE RESPONSIBILITY

A. Situations Where Case Responsibility *Is Not to be* Transferred

1. Placement In Foster Homes Located In Another County

Children needing out-of-home care shall live in close proximity to their homes whenever possible; and each county is responsible for developing sufficient placement resources to meet their county's needs.

2. Court Ordered Custody/Supervision

Court orders specifying custody or planning responsibility with a particular county must be followed until the county is relieved of said custody or planning responsibility.

B. Situations Where Case Responsibility *May* Not Be Appropriate

In some situations, it will be in the child and/or family's best interests for case responsibility to remain with the county of origin following the family's relocation. Case examples may include situations such as the following:

- (1) a change in the child welfare worker will place a child at risk or delay the family's progress toward established goals;
- (2) the county of origin is in close proximity to the new county of residence and the county of origin can readily maintain contact with the family after the relocation, or
- (3) the county of origin has determined the case can be safely closed in the very near future; i.e., the child and family's needs have been addressed, safety issues no longer exist, and services will be terminated as identified goals are being achieved.

In such circumstances, the county of origin may maintain case responsibility; however, the county of origin, the new county of residence, and the family must agree that it is in the child and family's best interests for case responsibility to remain with the county of origin. The decision that the county of origin will maintain case responsibility shall be documented in the case record.

V. DISPUTES OVER CASE RESPONSIBILITY

Counties that cannot resolve issues relating to the transfer of cases should contact the Office of Children and Family Services at SDHR for assistance in resolving any disputes.

VI. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFERRING CASE RESPONSIBILITY OUT-OF-STATE

A. CA/N Assessment/Investigation Pending and Family Relocates Out-of-State

When a county learns that a family has relocated out-of-state during a CA/N or Prevention Assessment, the child welfare worker must make every effort to obtain the family's new address. These efforts and their outcomes should be documented in the narrative in FACTS.

When the family's address is known, the child welfare worker must:

1. Contact the child welfare agency in the other state **immediately** (if case information indicates the child(ren) may be at imminent risk of harm), or within 3 days if no imminent risk is identified. This communication should include at a minimum:
 - the family's current address;
 - request their assistance in completing the initial assessment/investigation;
 - notify them of any information which indicates the child(ren) may be at imminent risk of harm; and
 - provide them with any information which will assist with completion of the assessment/investigation.

Note: On weekends or in afterhours situations where the other state agency cannot be reached, contact shall be made with the other state's local law enforcement agency. All efforts to contact the other state must be documented in FACTS.

2. send information in writing to the child welfare agency in the other state, within three working days of initial contact, confirmation of the information in 1. above (a copy of the CA/N or Prevention Assessment narrative, a CFA or another case summary may be used as an attachment to the letter if it contains the necessary information);

3. forward a copy of the letter and case information to the Office of Child Protective Services at SDHR; and
4. enter the disposition into the CA/N Central Registry upon completion of the assessment/investigation.

When the family's address is not known, the child welfare worker must:

1. fully document in FACTS all attempts to locate the family's location;
2. complete and submit a protective services alert to the Office of Child Protective Services at SDHR (refer to CPS Policies And Procedures, Forms And Instructions, for additional information); and
3. enter the disposition "unable to complete into to the CA/N Central Registry with an explanation of the disposition included in the CA/N narrative.

B. Protective Service Cases Involving Families Who Relocate Out-of-State

When a county learns that a family has relocated out-of-state while receiving on-going protective services, the child welfare worker must make every effort to obtain the family's new address. These efforts and their outcomes should be documented in the case narrative.

When the family's address is known, the child welfare worker must:

1. Contact the child welfare agency in the other state **immediately (if case information indicates the child(ren) may be at imminent risk of harm), or within 3 days if no imminent risk is identified**. This communication should include at a minimum:
 - notify them of the relocation and the family's current address;
 - inform them of any information which indicates the child(ren) may be at imminent risk of harm; and
 - provide them with case information which will assist the agency with assessing the child(ren) and family's current situation, safety risks, and need for services;

Note: On weekends or in afterhours situations where the other state agency cannot be reached, contact shall be made with the other state's local law enforcement agency. All efforts to contact the other state must be documented in FACTS.
2. Send a letter to the child welfare agency of the other state, within 3 working days of the initial contact, confirming the information in 1. above.

(A copy of the case narrative, the CFA, or another case summary may be used as an attachment to the letter if it contains the necessary information.)

3. Forward a copy of the letter and case information to the Office of Child Protective Services at SDHR.

When the family's address is not known, prior to closing the case the child welfare worker must complete and submit a protective services alert to the Office of Child Protective Services at SDHR. Refer to *CPS Policies And Procedures, Forms And Instructions*, for additional information.